

Appln. No.: 09/818,792
Amdt. Dated April 23, 2004
Reply to Office Action dated February 9, 2004

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of this Application is requested.

Claims 1-35 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC §112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that Applicants regard as the invention.

Claim 1 has been amended to supply an antecedent basis for "the sender".

Claims 1-3, 11-13, 17-18, 21, 25 and 28-30 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Smith et al. (US 2002/0095306 A1 or US 2002/0042808 A1).

Smith discloses the following in paragraphs [0022] and [0023] of Patent Application 0042808:

[0022] FIG. 9 shows a screen 130 that enables the user to configure preferences for delivery. Column 132 contains icons 132a, 132b, 132c identifying data objects comprising, e.g., first class mail (132a), parcels (132b), and periodicals (132c), respectively; other types of data objects may, of course, be included. Columns 134, 136, 138, and 140, respectively, identify sites or addresses to which the objects of a given object class are to be redirected. For example, column 134 contains "home" icons that identify the home address of the user as the site to which the object is to be directed or redirected; column 136 contains "locker" icons that specify a facility (e.g., a "lockbox") to which the object is to be directed or redirected; and column 138 contains "hold at PO" icons that identify the user's Post Office as the site to which the objects are to be directed or redirected. (For simplicity, hereinafter the terms "direction" or "directed" will be used to indicate either the initial selection of a delivery location ("direction"), or a subsequent change in this location ("redirection"), or both).

[0023] Column 140 allows the user to enter a specific address that may differ from one of the preset addresses of columns 134-138. For example, a home address may previously have been set for delivery of mail of all types. When the user is about to go on a

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business trip, for example, he or she may desire to have first class mail forwarded to the address of a hotel at which he or she will be staying until his or her return; to have parcels held in a locker; and to have periodicals held at the local Post Office. This is accomplished simply by clicking on the "Enter New Address" icon in column 140 in the "First Class" mail row 132a and by entering the address of the hotel; by clicking on the "Locker" icon in column 136 in the "Parcels" mail row 132b; and by clicking on the "Periodicals" icon in column 138 in the "Periodicals" mail row 132c. The chosen preferences are desirably then indicated (sic) by a checkmark or other indicia, as shown in FIG. 9. These preferences may remain until subsequently changed, or may default to a user-defined configuration after a certain time period; or a sequence of addresses and associated time periods may be provided for the various data objects."

Smith discloses the following in paragraphs [0053] and [0054] of Patent

Application 0095306:

"[0053] If the user continues the session, the Postport system retains the relevant postal transaction session information in a manner that is linked to the user's assigned user ID, as discussed below. When the user later logs on to the Postport system from, for example, a terminal 188 at the postal station 176 using the assigned user ID, the system transfers the session to the terminal. The user then continues to enter and/or edit the mailing address and postage information and/or print the labels and the postage before ending the session.

[0054] The session transfer may be facilitated by assigning to a given user a coded physical identification token, such as a key fob 200 with a User ID included as a machine-readable barcode 201 (FIG. 11). The user presents his or her physical identification token to a scanner that is connected to the system through, for example, the work station node 180. The system then prompts the user to supply his or her password and, after verification of the password, the system transfers the linked messages and thus the session to the terminal then in use. As discussed in more detail below, the system may also transfer the linked messages to the various other terminals in the same postal station, such that the user can readily transfer the session to another terminal that is connected to a printer, a postage meter, and so forth, by logging on using the assigned user ID. The user may thus take full advantage of the Postport system's virtual post office services, even if he or she

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does not have the appropriate hardware and/or software to print the labels and postage.

Smith does not disclose or anticipate the steps of claim 1 as amended, and those claims dependent thereon, of capturing by the carrier the name and physical address of the recipient and the sender in the form of an image; transmitting the image to a data center where the image is processed by translating the image consisting of text and graphics to selected alphanumerics; and notifying by the data center to the recipient of the expected delivery of the deposited mail and indicating the selected alphanumerics of the translated image.

In Smith, the recipient is not notified of the expected delivery of deposited mail while indicating the selected alphanumerics of the translated image. Smith also requires that the (sender) user print a user ID included as a machine-readable barcode 201 so as to capture the identity of each mailpiece during the inbound postal tracking process, to enable accurate data message linkage prior to the physical delivery of the mail piece to the (recipient) user. Furthermore, Smith requires this same ID code be associated (added) to any other postal data object (message, etc.) so that it can be later associated (linked) at the mail piece recipient's computer display. Smith does not resolve how he can produce the accurate merging of more than one such data objects for a sender that submits more than one mail piece with the same personal ID code into the postal system on the same day.

Applicants do not claim a method in which a sender printed personal ID code is added to each mailpiece, and the ID code is captured by the post. Applicants claim a method in which the carrier captures the name and physical address of the recipient

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and sender in the form of an image and the translation by a data center of the name and physical address of the recipient into an e-mail address.

In view of the above, claims 1-35, as amended, is patentable. If the Examiner has any questions, will he please telephone the undersigned at the telephone number noted below.

Respectfully submitted,



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